

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 8502

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IR, IS
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS

1. AMBASSADOR AND DCM ON SEPTEMBER 5 MET WITH URIEL LUBRANI AND MOSHE GILBOA, THE DE FACTO AMBASSADOR AND DCM RESPECTIVELY OF THE ISRAELI MISSION HERE, FOR GENERAL REVIEW OF CURRENT IRANIAN DOMESTIC SCENE. THE NOTED THAT JEWISH COMMUNITY IN IRAN (ABOUT 80,000 POPULATION) IS EXTREMELY APPREHENSIVE OVER POLITICAL SITUATION IN IRAN. EXTREMIST MULLAHS AND THOSE UNDER THEIR INFLUENCE ARE ISSUING STRIDENTLY ANTI-JEWISH PAMPHLETS AND DIRECTING OTHER THREATS AGAINST THE COMMUNITY. STATEMENT BY SHARIAT MADARI (TEHRAN 98485) IS HELPFUL BUT COMMUNITY WILL CONTINUE TO FEAR THAT ONCE THE RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVES ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN PURGING THE BAHAIS FROM GOVERNMENT, ATTENTION WILL FOCUS AGAIN ON JEWISH COMMUNITY.

2. IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S QUERY, LUBRANI SAID THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND IRAN AND THE NUMEROUS AREA OF COOPERATION, INCLUDING THE INTELLIGENCE EXCHANGE, HAVE NOT BEEN AFFECTED. NOR, HE SAID, DID HE EXPECT THE ANTI-JEWISH CAMPAIGN OR THE STRENGTH OF THE ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS TO BE TRANSLATED INTO A COOLING OF THE TIES. (COMMENT: WE ARE NOT AS SANGUINE.)

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3. IN GENERAL, THE TWO ISRAELI OFFICIALS ARE PESSIMISTIC OVER FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. LUBRANI, WHO HAD MOVED INTO ONE OF THE SEPTEMBER 4 MARCHES, COMMENTED THAT THEY WERE WELL AND TIGHTLY ORGANIZED AND DISCIPLINED BY MARCH WARDENS. THE LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE DEMONSTRATORS WAS IN THEIR LATE TEENS AND

EARLY TWENTIES AND REASONABLY WELL DRESSED. MANY OF THE SLOGANS WERE VIRULENTLY ANTI-SHAH AND HE HAD PERSONALLY WITNESSED THE SHOWERING OF FLOWERS ON SOME OF THE POLICE AND MILITARY. HE VIEW THE EFFORT TO WIN OVER THE SECURITY FORCES AS POTENTIALLY OMINOUS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT. LUBRANI MUSED THAT AT THIS TIME IT IS DIFFICULT TO SPECULATE HOW FAR THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS WISH TO PUSH THE SHAH BUT HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THEIR SUCCESSES TO DATE, AND THEIR LIKELY ASSESSMENT THAT THE SHAH HAS LOST CONTROL, WOULD WORK AGAINST A REASONABLE COMPROMISE OR POLITICAL CONSENSUS.

4. GILBOA, WHO TENDS TO VIEW EVENTS DARKLY, STATED THAT "A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION" NOW PREVAILS IN IRAN BUT, IN CONTRAST TO MOST HISTORICAL REVOLUTIONS, THERE IS NO CLEARLY IDENTIFIED LEADER OR LEADERS TO CONTROL, OR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF, THE REVOLUTION.

5. LUBRANI COMMENTED THAT HE IS STILL CONCERNED BY THE SHAH'S HEALTH AND THE FACT THAT THERE IS ON ONE LIKE FORMER COURT MINISTER ALAM TO GIVE FRANK AND WISE COUNSEL TO THE SHAH. WHEN HE SAW HOVEYDA ON SEPTEMBER 4, THE LATTER WAS OUT OF SORTS AND DISCOURAGED; THIS WAS WORRISONE, HE SAID, FOR HOVEYDA DOES HAVE SOME INFLUENCE WITH THE SHAH AND IS A SHREWD OPERATOR.
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(COMMENT: DESCRIPTION OF HOVEYDA IS IN MARKED CONTRAST TO FEISTY APPEARANCE ON AUGUST 31 WHEN AMBASSADOR SAW HIM, AND MAY GIVE WEIGHT TO RUMOR THAT HOVEYDA'S TENURE IS SHAKY.)

6. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG US THAT THE SHAH HAS TO PULL OUT OF HIS CURRENT DEPRESSION SOON, GIVE AN APPEARANCE OF CONFIDENT LEADERSHIP AGAIN, AND START TO RALLY THE MODERATE AND CENTRIST FORCES WHICH SUPPORT HIM AND THE MONARCHY.
SULLIVAN

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